

Chapter 6. Solution Evaluation and Evaluation Criteria

This chapter presents the evaluation of community-identified solutions for improving transportation mobility in Central Alameda County. Community members and agency representatives suggested these solutions as part of the public outreach process for the Community-Based Transportation Plan. This chapter provides an overview of the criteria used to evaluate the solutions and preliminary recommendations based on the evaluation.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the community identified 27 transportation solutions through extensive outreach activity as part of this project. Through a collaborative effort, the consulting team and community representatives established evaluation criteria to apply to these solutions. The solutions that did not meet the criteria due to excessive cost per beneficiary, physical constraints, duplication of existing programs, or lack of wide community support, are described in **Appendix J**. A total of 10 solutions were selected that best meet these criteria. The final 10 solutions are presented below and the evaluation criteria is discussed later this chapter. More detailed information about these solutions is included in Chapter 7.

Recommended Solutions for Further Consideration

Based on the preliminary evaluation of community-identified solutions, several solutions are recommended for further consideration in Cherryland, Ashland and South Hayward because they address the transportation problems identified in all three communities. One solution applies specifically to Cherryland: *Sidewalks*. Each is described briefly in the following sections and they are detailed in Chapter 7. Solutions not selected are described in **Appendix J**.

Transit Service and Amenity Solutions

1. Adjustments to AC Transit Service

AC Transit recently analyzed the needs of these communities in order to provide better service and the results were included in the Central Alameda County Plan. Due to budget constraints, only a fraction of the plan's contents are being implemented and some service cuts were made in 2002. While the community had not felt the full impact of these service reductions at the time these solutions were identified, three key areas of improvement were identified by large numbers of community members. These include the need for more frequent bus service; extended bus service hours to cover early mornings and evenings (both weekdays and weekends); and demand-response service for the general public.

While this solution is highly ranked in most evaluation categories because it is a critical element of improved transportation for the disadvantaged population, it fares poorly with regard to funding and cost criteria. These are high-cost solutions and funding cannot be readily identified in existing plans.

2. Shelters

Adding bus shelters is both relatively inexpensive and popular with the community as a very tangible improvement in the quality of the public transit experience. The cost is low, and the program can be incrementally reduced or expanded depending on resources. The program is already in place, so there are few institutional barriers to implementation beyond extending the existing agreement. Although the solution does not necessarily improve mobility in the community, it improves the experience of using transit service which can encourage use of transit.

Public Information Solutions

3. Transportation information on a Local Television Station

The local access television station has offered to make and show television programs about available transit service as a community service. Because limited information about transit services is one of the critical community concerns, this solution would provide a no-cost mechanism for presenting very basic information to the public (such as how to board the bus, get to key destinations, and read bus schedules and maps, for example). While community members did not express a significant level of interest in this effort, it addresses one of their key concerns and the ease of implementation and potential benefits (inexpensive, easily accessible public information in multiple languages) suggest this solution would be an appropriate part of a community-based transportation strategy.

4. Transportation Information Center in the Community

This solution would be a drop-in information center and telephone number to dial for local information (transit schedules, eligibility, etc.) for public transit and other services. It assumes an automated system backed up by live multilingual staff to answer individual questions. Part of the transportation information center's role could also be to establish a "bus buddy" program and to coordinate local group trips.

5. More Comprehensive Information about AC Transit at Bus Stops and on Buses

According to community members and representatives, providing additional transit information at stops and on buses would facilitate the public's use of the bus system. Depending on how it is carried out, it could be a relatively inexpensive solution, although a higher level of investment would result in greater quality and comprehensiveness that is more likely to meet the community's expectations. This is also linked to the next solution, Multilingual Translation of Transit Schedules, Signs, and Other Information.

6. Multilingual Translation of Transit Schedules, Signs, and Other Information

Almost half of residents in all three neighborhoods speak a language other than English at home.¹ With the diversity of languages spoken in all three of these study communities (and throughout central Alameda County), providing information in multiple languages will be critical to keeping transit riders informed and encouraging people to use transit. This solution could be relatively inexpensive to implement with a high level of organized community participation and has a high level of community support.

Pedestrian Solutions

7. Sidewalks

Much of Cherryland lacks basic sidewalk facilities. Pedestrians including children, seniors, and people with disabilities are forced to share the roadway with automobile traffic. This solution would build on existing efforts spearheaded by the Alameda County Redevelopment Agency, United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County, AC Transit, the Cherryland Community Association, and the office of Supervisor Nate Miley.

8. Better Lighting

Residents of these communities stated that they are sometimes afraid to travel on foot or by bus at night because they fear they might become a victim of crime. Improved lighting enhances the feeling of personal safety on the streets and according to community members, would encourage more people to feel comfortable walking at night. This solution is a medium-cost solution that can be implemented within a relatively short time, and it enjoys very high support in all three of the study communities.

Bicycle Solutions

9. Improve Bicycle Access

A combination of bicycle parking, bicycle lanes and assistance in purchasing bicycles would provide a multifaceted approach to promoting the safe use of bicycles in the study area. These are a combination of low-to-high cost solutions that fared relatively well in the evaluation of solutions. Installing bicycle parking and bicycle lanes serves to market bicycling in the community. Although more costly, bicycle lockers would further enhance the propensity to use bicycles for local trips. Another barrier to using a bicycle is being able to afford one, and bicycle purchase assistance would be another strategy for making the bicycle a more viable transportation mode in the community. This solution does not have a high level of community advocacy.

¹ 2000 Census data for Ashland and Cherryland

Auto-Based Solutions

10. Low-Cost Auto Loans and Carsharing

Of the auto-focused solutions, this ranks among the highest because it is less cumbersome to implement than some of the others and it addresses a number of the transportation criteria. SEATAPP currently provides low-cost auto loans to former CalWORKS recipients in Alameda County and the program could be expanded to cover non-CalWORKS recipients in certain income categories in the study area. Carsharing could be subsidized by employers or local agencies, and would be appropriate for short errands in the community. Carsharing could be modeled on or operated by City CarShare. Of the solutions recommended for further consideration, this program has one of the highest costs per beneficiary.

Evaluation Criteria

The ten solutions discussed in the previous section were identified using the following evaluation criteria. The consulting team developed a list of evaluation criteria that were presented and modified at a meeting of Central Alameda County Community-Based Transportation Plan community representatives.² These criteria are selected based on a combination of factors:

- They are modeled on the outreach objectives summarized in the Community Outreach Plan for the project (Memorandum 2).
- They reflect the objectives of the MTC Lifeline Transportation Report.
- They reflect criteria that have been used in another Community-Based Transportation Plan effort.
- They are based on criteria used to evaluate Welfare-to-Work options.

The criteria that were refined in collaboration with the community representatives and then used to evaluate the solutions proposed by community members are as follows:

Community Support and Participation Criteria

1. Has community support and advocacy.
2. Addresses priority local needs.
3. Incorporates the needs of diverse communities in terms of geography, language and culture.

² This meeting took place on Tuesday, November 18 at the Eden Youth and Family Center.

Funding and Cost Criteria

4. Is efficient, based on cost per beneficiary.
5. Is a low-cost or no-cost solution.
6. Has the potential to attract existing funding sources.
7. Funding is identified through an existing plan.
8. Funding for operating and maintenance costs is identified for the short- and long-term. Alternately, “flexible” funding is available until the project is proven cost effective.

Transportation Service Criteria

9. Has effective and measurable impact.
10. Addresses community-wide needs.
11. Reduces travel time to major destinations (major employment, commercial, and transit centers).
12. Outcome (service and information) is easy to use and understand.
13. Provides a benefit to residents targeted in this plan (with the greatest mobility challenges).

Implementation Criteria

14. Has a short time to implementation.
15. Roles and responsibilities are clear and realistic. A lead agency can be clearly identified.
16. Can be modified as community needs change.

For each of these criteria, a scale of High (H), Medium (M) and Low (L) is used. While the evaluation includes a mix of qualitative and quantitative factors, the overall review is somewhat subjective based on the community context and the consultant’s experience.

The project evaluation research and collaboration with community representatives also identified several descriptive categories. While our participation efforts established that these are important things to know about a project, they do not indicate if a project is necessarily appropriate for this plan. These categories are not used to compare solutions so that one can get a higher rating than another. Instead, they provide a means for describing specific elements of some of the solutions. These descriptive factors are as follows:

- A. Community plays a role in implementation.
- B. Bridges the needs of the study communities.
- C. Has potential for joint funding from multiple sources.
- D. Provides additional transportation options to major destinations (major employment, commercial, and transit centers).
- E. Requires or allows for tiered implementation: can be implemented in the short term, medium-term and/or long-term.

Summary of Evaluation Process

Based on the evaluation of 27 solutions, the ten solutions that were listed at the beginning of this chapter are recommended for implementation in the short term. Using the evaluation considerations presented above, Figure 6-1 summarizes the results of the evaluation process for the recommended solutions.

Figure 6-1 Solution Evaluation Matrix

| EVALUATION CRITERIA | 1. AC Transit | 2. Shelters | 3. Local TV Station | 4. Transportation Info. Ctr. | 5. AC Transit Info. | 6. Multilingual | 7. Sidewalks | 8. Lighting | 9. Bicycle Access | 10. Auto Loan Program/Carshare |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Community Support and Participation Criteria | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Has community support and advocacy | H | M | L | M | H | H | H | H | M | M |
| 2. Addresses priority local needs | H | H | L | H | H | H | H | H | M | M |
| 3. Incorporates the needs of diverse communities | H | M | H | H | H | H | H | H | M | M |
| Funding and Cost Criteria | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Is efficient, based on cost per beneficiary | M | M | H | M | H | M | M | M | H | L |
| 5. Is a low-cost or no-cost solution | L | H | H | H | M | H | L | M | M | M |
| 6. Has potential to attract existing funding sources | M | H | H | M | M | H | M | M | H | M |
| 7. Funding is identified through an existing plan | L | H | H | L | M | L | H | M | H | L |
| 8. Funding for operating and maintenance identified | L | H | M | M | L | L | M | H | H | H |
| Transportation Service Criteria | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Effective and measurable impact | H | M | L | M | M | H | H | M | M | M |
| 10. Addresses community-wide needs | H | M | M | H | H | H | H | H | M | M |
| 11. Reduces travel time to major destinations | H | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | M | N/A | N/A | H |
| 12. Easy to use and understand | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | N/A | H | H |
| 13. Provides benefit to residents targeted in plan | H | H | H | M | H | H | H | M | M | H |
| Implementation Criteria | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14. Short time to implementation | H | H | H | H | H | H | M | H | M | M |
| 15. Roles and responsibilities are clear and realistic | H | H | H | M | H | M | M | M | M | H |
| 16. Can be modified as community needs change | H | H | H | H | H | H | L | L | M | H |

L = Solution scored poorly for this criteria

M = Solution scored about average for this criteria.

H = Solution was one of the best for this criteria.

Conclusion

The consultant evaluation process identified preliminary recommendations to be carried forward for consideration by community members and agency representatives. These were shared with the public at Community Open Houses in February 2004 in Ashland/Cherryland and South Hayward.

Chapter 7 presents an overview of each of the recommended solutions, basic costs and funding information, and an evaluation of the components of the solution. **Appendix J** provides background information on the solutions that were not recommended based on the evaluation process.